

## **CITY OF BELMONT**

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

#### **ACTION MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2008, 7:00 PM**

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

#### **1. ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Parsons, Horton, McKenzie, Mercer, Mayer, Reed, Frautschi  
Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Senior Planner DiDonato (SP), Assistant Planner Walker (AP), City Attorney Zafferano (CA), Recording Secretary Flores (RS)

#### **2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

CDD de Melo announced that the applicant for Public Hearing Item 6A, 1301 Ralston Avenue, asked that his item be continued. Staff will schedule the project for a meeting in February and notices will be sent out accordingly.

#### **3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments)**

CDD de Melo used the opportunity to wish his son Jackson a happy 7th birthday.

#### **4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

##### **4A. Minutes of November 18, 2008**

MOTION: By Commissioner Reed, seconded by Vice Chair Horton, to accept the Minutes of November 18, 2008, as presented.

Ayes: Reed, Horton, Mercer, Mayer, McKenzie, Frautschi, Parsons  
Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

#### **5. OLD BUSINESS:**

##### **5A. 2612 Hallmark Drive/Single-Family Design Review – Extension Request**

AP Walker summarized the staff memorandum, noting that staff believed the findings for granting an extension to January 15, 2010 can be made in the affirmative.

Commissioner Mercer asked if any progress had been made since September 24, 2008, at which time staff gave the go-ahead to obtain buildings permits. AP Walker stated that none of the items had been addressed and deferred the question to the applicant for further information.

Nadia Holober, attorney for the applicant, thanked staff for their hard work on this project. She indicated that the extension is required partly due to the fact that the City does not allow grading from 1/15 through 4/15, and also because she is having difficulty selling property and securing funding needed for the project. Responding to Chair Parsons' question, she confirmed that she is not trying to sell the second lot that is associated with the subject site.

Motion: By Commissioner Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.

Commissioner Frautschi stated that since he had not supported the original project due to bulk, hardscape and cut and fill issues he would not be supporting the extension.

Commissioner Mercer commented that she is in the same position. She did not deem the project appropriate to begin with and her opinion had not changed.

MOTION: By Commissioner Reed, seconded by Vice Chair Horton, to adopt the Resolution approving an Extension of a Single-Family Design Review for 2612 Hallmark Drive (Appl. No. 2008-0062).

Ayes: Reed, Horton, Mayer, McKenzie, Parsons

Noes None

Abstain: Mercer, Frautschi

Motion passed 5/0/2

Chair Parsons announced that this item can be appealed to City Council within 10 days.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

### 6A. PUBLIC HEARING – 1301 Ralston Avenue – CONTINUED TO A DATE UNCERTAIN

To consider a Conditional Use Permit to amend the Conditions of Approval for Planning Commission Resolution 1988-2 (Detailed Development Plan, Conditional Use Permit, Design Review). The request would establish two lots for the subject property. (Appl. No. PA 2007-0062) (Continued From April 1, 2008 Planning Commission Meeting)

APN's: 045-190-040, 045-190-030, & 045-170-010

Zoning: PD – Planned Development

CEQA Status: Recommended Categorical Exemption per Section 15270

APPLICANT: Joel Roos and PAMI PCC, Inc.

OWNER: RV California, LP

PROJECT PLANNER: Project Planner: Jennifer Walker, (650) 595-7453

### 6B. PUBLIC HEARING – Vacant Lot on Carlmont Drive (2100 Block)

To consider a Design Review Permit, Conditional Use Permit, Grading Plan, and Parcel Map to construct three, two-story townhome condominiums totaling 6,093 square feet in gross floor area on a vacant 10,421 square foot parcel located on Carlmont Drive (Appl. No. 2008-0006)

APN: 045-023-100; Zoned: R-4 (Multi Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Mitigated Negative Declaration

APPLICANT: Moshe Dinar

OWNER: Laura Watanuki

PROJECT PLANNER: Damon DiDonato, (650) 637-2908

SP DiDonato summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval subject to the conditions attached. He called attention to a discrepancy between the floor plans and elevations for Units A – as shown on the elevations but not on the floor plans, it is the intent that there will be windows on the left side where there is not a common wall.

Responding to Commissioner Mayer's question, SP DiDonato confirmed that there will be 6 covered and 3 uncovered parking places, and that the issues from the earlier Study Session were related to an unsafe condition in terms of backing out onto Carlmont Drive. The applicant worked with traffic engineers to find a way to turn vehicles around by doing "K" turns on the site so that they could pull out rather than back out.

Responding to Commissioner Frautschi, SP DiDonato stated that both Units A will be moved back 2 feet, which would create the possibility of widening the planting strip, and that a condition of approval insures that terraces will be paved with pervious surfaces.

Moshe Dinar, architect/applicant, introduced the property owner and the project team. He thanked staff for helping them resolve a few issues from the previous submission, one of which was the safety of vehicles coming out of the project. He stated that the traffic engineer felt very strongly that it was important to make that happen, 1) to minimize the loss of parking on the street, and 2) to make sure that cars coming out of the property would be heading out and be able to see oncoming cars. He felt that the project will complement the neighborhood and looked forward to starting construction after the rainy season.

Commissioner Reed asked the landscape architect to explain why he would be planting Australian Willow and Western Redbud trees even though the City's arborist said that they may not be suitable for that area. Christopher Ty, architect for the project, responded that the Sunset Western Garden book describes both of them as appropriate small scale garden trees and ideal for what they are looking for in the back yard, the two front corners of the property, on the left-hand side of the property and under overhead utility lines. He has used both trees frequently and never had problems with them in a garden condition. He added that the Australian Willow is not like the American-type willow and all of the trees are listed as drought-tolerant in the Sunset Western Garden book or they meet the East Bay Municipal Utility District definition for water efficient plants.

Responding to Commissioner Frautschi as to why he did not incorporate street trees in the two bulb-outs, he stated that it had not occurred to him and thought it was a wonderful idea, and that he had no problem increasing the size of the planting strip. He was not in favor of eliminating the three sod lawn areas as he felt the residents would lose the opportunity to have a usable area for children to play.

Laura Watanuki, property owner, addressed the Commission, noting that they have reduced the size of the project from 4 townhomes to 3 townhomes as requested by the Commission, and that the property will be managed as rentals for the rest of her life. She stated that she was willing to accept the conditions of approval and asked that the project be approved at this meeting so that they can proceed this spring.

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, seconded by Vice Chair Horton, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.

Commissioner Mayer questioned the consolidation of all the driveways into one, but could go along with it and could make the findings.

Commissioner Mercer could make the findings only because of the new traffic arrangement – she felt it was much a safer alternative and more scenic along that street due to extra plantings. She concurred with Commissioner Frautschi's recommendation of 2 trees in the bulb-outs – something that would grow taller than the 20-foot rooftops to keep the homes in scale and help mitigate the bulk. With that small landscaping change and all of the other recommendations by staff she could make all the findings for the project.

Commissioner McKenzie liked the overall feel of the project, especially the driveway solutions. He felt that the study sessions that preceded this review were quite effective because the applicant employed the advice and suggestions that came from those meetings and responded to all the concerns that he could recall. He could make all of the findings for Design Review, Conditional Use Permit, Grading Plan and Parcel Map.

Vice Chair Horton liked the design. Her only concern was that people visiting or with additional cars may choose to park between Units A and B, but that would be the property manager's problem.

Commissioner Reed thought the study session had been very helpful and that the project will be a great addition to the neighborhood. He could make all of the findings and believed that it is in conformance with the General Plan.

Commissioner Frautschi expressed his feelings that the architect and landscape architect both did a very good job for the owner and thanked them for bringing the project to the Commission. He hoped they would incorporate 2' into the garden strip in front and would prefer to see something a little larger than the Western Redbud tree proposed for the far left plot, noting that a larger tree would mitigate the lights from cars coming down Hastings that would shine directly into the two units.

Chair Parsons asked for a revised landscape plan with some additional trees and agreed with Commissioner

Frautschi that they need some larger trees in the front to mitigate some of the lights and noise. He suggested that they try to reduce the bulb-out on Unit B adjacent to the garage, which could probably swing further out so that there would be less paving there to match what is on the other side of Unit A on the far left. He thought they needed at least a 3' landscape strip along the front of the two Units A to prevent cars from parking on the sidewalk, and also hoped they could find a way to increase the width of the landscaping in front of Unit B, perhaps by swinging it more towards the bulb-out on the far right side.

MOTION: By Commissioner McKenzie, seconded by Commissioner Frautschi, to adopt the Resolution adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for a Design Review, Conditional Use Permit, Grading Plan, and Parcel Map approval for the construction of three two-story townhome condominiums on a vacant 10,421 sq.ft. parcel (APN: 045-023-100) located on Carlmont Drive (Appl. No. 2008-0006)

Ayes: McKenzie, Frautschi, Mercer, Mayer, Reed, Horton, Parsons  
Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

MOTION: By Commissioner McKenzie, seconded by Commissioner Reed, to adopt the Resolution approving a Design Review Permit, Conditional Use Permit, Grading Plan, and Parcel Map for the Construction of three two-story town home condominiums on a vacant 10,421 sq.ft. parcel (APN 045-023-100) located on Carlmont Drive (Appl. No. 2008-2006), with the Conditions of Approval attached and with the added condition that the final Landscape Plan be brought back to the Commission showing the changes as discussed.

Ayes: McKenzie, Reed, Mayer, Mercer, Frautschi, Horton, Parsons  
Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

Chair Parsons announced that this decision can be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

## 7. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:

CDD de Melo noted for the record that Item 6A, the Public Hearing for 1301 Ralston Avenue, will be continued to a date uncertain. City staff will be sending out public notification via newspaper and to all property owners within 300' and are targeting one of the February Planning Commission meetings for that action. This action was taken on a continuance request from the applicant received early that day.

MOTION: By Chair Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Frautschi, to continue Item 6A to a date uncertain. Motion carried 7/0 by a show of hands.

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

7A. Motel 6 – 1101 Shoreway Road  
No update.

7B. NDNU (Koret) Athletic Field  
No update other than that he is having some scheduling difficulty with getting task force members back together along with the University. Hopeful for a meeting after the first of the year.

7C. Charles Armstrong School – 1405 Solana Drive  
Has heard from the school and they have proposed some dates for a meeting towards the end of January. Targeted either January 20th or January 27th.

7D. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project  
As a result of talks between the Belmont and Redwood City City Managers, this project is back on track and it is anticipated that landscape plans will be ready to bring back to the Commission and the City Council in

February or March, with the hope of starting construction toward the end of spring 2009. Redwood City is moving it back into a higher priority level.

7E. San Mateo Development – North Road/43rd Avenue

He and Chair Parsons need to talk to the San Mateo staff and go over the plans to see if there is any remedy for activities at the site. Belmont's Public Works Director is standing firm on not issuing an encroachment permit until all issues have been resolved.

7F. 900 Sixth Avenue – Belmont Vista Facility

No update. Commissioner Frautschi noticed that the two dead trees have been removed but have not been replaced.

7G. Safeway – 1100 El Camino Real

Noticed that in the past 10 days landscape crews have been doing some clean up and trim work along the north side of the building. Commissioner Mercer and Chair Parsons have observed that the litter on the south side of the building has not been addressed, the gutter is full of trash, and it all goes into the storm drain. Commissioner Mayer suggested that it would be useful for them to consider installing a container for cigarette butt disposal similar to the one at the Belmont Library.

7H. Vancea Auto – 900 Ralston Avenue

Code Enforcement has started an investigation and taken photos of this site, and will be following up with a letter relative to the issues raised by the Commission at the last meeting. Chair Parsons called attention to a vehicle that is parked in front that looks like it could be used to haul hazardous liquids.

Other Items

CDD de Melo apologized for not having a report on the requested parking survey for the downtown village area, but it will be tackled within the next month or two.

Reported on the neighborhood workshop that took place on Thursday, December 4th, in the EOC to discuss the Belmont Village Zoning Amendments Project and the General Plan update as well as an update on the City's Housing Element efforts. There were about 45-50 attendees and he felt it was fairly well received. The Planning Commission and City Council should start to see the draft amendments and the draft policies coming within the next 60 to 90 days.

The last meeting for 2008 of the Green Advisory Committee was scheduled for the following evening, 12/17/08 at 7:30 in the EOC room.

CDD de Melo thanked Commissioners for the hard work they put in during the year. They will be formally recognized at the annual commission appreciation dinner some time in February of 09. He added that Belmont is very well served by this Commission and they make a difference in how this city moves forward. Commissioners in turn thanked staff for their efforts as well.

CA Zafferano reported that Commissioners will be receiving the December Code Enforcement Report within the next week or so and should feel free to call him if they have any questions.

CDD de Melo reminded that City Hall will be closed for the holidays from December 25th through January 4th, will reopen on January 5th and the January 6th Planning Commission meeting will be cancelled.

Commissioner Frautschi asked for an update in the form of a report on the undergrounding on Old County Road.

Commissioner Frautschi raised the issue of the landscaping at the CalTrain station, noting that there are at least 5 dead trees and that the Belmont station is not maintained as well as the San Carlos station, even though Belmont pays the same amount of taxes and paid more for the undergrounding. Discussion ensued as to what will be required to see improvements at the station, and it was suggested that photographs be taken of both stations for comparison purposes. CDD de Melo felt that the parties involved need to sit down and look at the long-term viability of the station. Commissioner Mayer suggested that one of the Commissioners make some phone calls to find out what the problem is and then come back and maybe

exert pressure at a higher level. CDD de Melo agreed to put this item on future Reports, Studies and Update lists as a permanent reminder to stay on task.

8. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009

Liaison: Commissioner McKenzie

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Mercer

Commissioner Mercer stated that she will not be able to attend.

Chair Parsons noted that it is not a requirement that somebody from the Commission be there. If the designee cannot attend he/she could call the Mayor prior to the meeting and ask if there are any items requiring input from the Commission.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall. The January 6, 2009 meeting will be cancelled.

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Carlos de Melo  
Planning Commission Secretary

CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the  
Community Development Department.

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.